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A comprehensive ESEA/Title I program of small-group reading instruction for 500 elementary school children is described, and the results of this Intensive Reading Instructional Teams program are presented. Decoding, comprehension, vocabulary development, and independent reading are emphasized as a part of the team approach. Successful activities which are listed include the use of individual learning packets, creative dramatics, and newspaper and booklet publications of students' work that help to build a positive self-image. Successful outcomes which are listed include improved attitudes toward school and reading, parental involvement, and the development of oral language usage. Results of evaluative studies, presented in tables, reveal significant gains in word forms and word recognition at the primary level and significant gains in vocabulary, comprehension, and total reading for the majority of the intermediate-grade pupils. Questionnaire results indicated that parents, students, and teachers responded quite favorably toward the program and its subsequent effects. (RT)

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PATTERNS FOR PROGRESS

IRIT

AN EVALUATION 1967-1968

RE001 864

HARTFORD CONNECTICUT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

PATTERNS FOR PROGRESS
AN EVALUATION

1967-1968

IRIT

ESEA + SADC
PROJECTS

RESEARCH EVALUATION

HARTFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION

1968

Prepared By

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INTENSIVE READING INSTRUCTIONAL TEAMS

For the third successive year, three Intensive Reading Instructional Teams, or IRIT's as they were commonly called, continued to provide almost 500 youngsters with a comprehensive program of intensive small-group reading instruction.

OBJECTIVES

The IRIT program was designed to:

1. Assist children in mastering the decoding process.
2. Develop each child's ability to read and comprehend.
3. Motivate the child to read independently.

It was hypothecated that average group gains of approximately one year could be accumulated in both the decoding and comprehension areas following an instructional cycle of approximately ten weeks direction.

DESCRIPTION

The program continued to use a departmentalized structure and a team approach to reading. The pupils moved from teacher to teacher at one hour intervals with each teacher specializing in one of three instructional areas. These areas were: (1) the decoding program, which included instruction in word analysis or word attack skills; (2) the basal reading program, which stressed vocabulary and comprehension development; and (3) the individualized reading program, designed to develop an enjoyment of reading and an appreciation of literature. These three areas were coordinated and the pupils received instruction in each area daily. Pupils returned to the sending schools in the afternoon to receive instruction in other basic subjects.

As more research became available on early childhood education

one of the three Intensive Reading Instructional Teams selected a first grade class in a pilot project to test whether or not similar techniques could be applied in a primary program. Efforts in this direction are being evaluated, with a further study of first graders scheduled for the coming year.

A number of IRIT activities were reported as being particularly successful in working with children at the intermediate level. These included:

1. The reading achievement of the pupils attending the IRIT for a period of 8 weeks was improved by at least one book level for most students.
2. The IRIT Open House proved to be an effective way of stimulating parental interest in their children's progress. The centers were visited by approximately 40% of the parents who had children enrolled.
3. Marked improvement was noted in the pupil's attitude toward reading as was evidenced by the average number of individual books read. Approximately 40 books per child were read during each 8 week cycle.
4. Continuous use of the lending library of paper-back books to promote wider reading has been effective as a motivating factor in self-reliance and appreciation of literature.
5. The development of individual learning packets for use in the individualized area provided activitiesgeared to the pupil's needs.
6. Reading was correlated with home economics and industrial arts which resulted in creative language booklets written

by the children. The use of up-to-date science content material was also used for the stimulation and enrichment of vocabularies.

7. The use of creative dramatics and choral speaking were used for motivation and the improvement of language skills.
8. A display of varied reading materials gave teachers an opportunity to explore in depth and evaluate the kinds of material available for instruction.
9. Overhead projector games were devised which stimulated interest in learning by the pupils.
10. Today's Negroes, a booklet of biographies, was written by students with team directed activities to improve self concept.
11. Weekly newspapers and booklets of students work were published to help build a positive self-image. These included:

    A Poem is A Poem, and

    A Very Special Puzzle Book
12. Effective use of afternoons to develop creative techniques and methods of attacking cooperatively the reading deficiencies of disadvantaged students.
13. The distribution of the homonym booklet "Flee-Zees" to each fourth grade class in Hartford. This booklet was written by an IRIT member with the pupils in the program. Response to this effort has been very good.

The most successful outcomes of the primary project were reported as:

1. Improved attitude towards school and reading after finding success in reading.
2. Involvement of parents in the reading program.
3. Development of an individualized program which seemed to satisfy the needs of the children.
4. Learning experiences through the use of manipulative materials.
5. Individual test results indicated children learned the alphabet.
6. Linguistic approach indicated that children were aided in unlocking unknown words.
7. Developing oral language usage and enhancing self-image by allowing photos of the children to go home. This enabled the youngsters to discuss themselves in conjunction with the school situation with their parents.
8. Periodic newsletters were sent home to inform parents of the children's activities in reading school.
9. Setting aside one afternoon per week in which parents were able to come to the reading center to get material and suggestions from the teachers.
10. Development of a listening center and activity center within the reading program.

In addition to the foregoing, the total IRIT program served to:

1. Assist teachers from the sending schools to learn about new methods and techniques for teaching disadvantaged pupils.
2. Demonstrate the IRIT program to teachers from other school systems in Connecticut.

A number of problems were reported:

1. Housing was a major problem. One team had to move every year, within the same building.
2. The short length of time devoted to preparation for the revamping of the intermediate program to a primary program.
3. More substantial analysis of students is needed prior to entrance into the primary program.
4. Coordination of the program in the schools and center are necessary for best results.

EVALUATION

To measure the total instructional effects of the IRIT program, a number of studies were undertaken. These studies, which were concerned primarily with reading achievement, involved the use of a sample of cycles, arbitrarily selected so as to represent each IRIT and each part of the instructional year.

In terms of the study's structure, each of the groups of children, selected to represent a particular cycle, was tested at the beginning of the nine or ten week instructional period with Form W of The California Reading Achievement Test (1957 Edition) and again, with Form X, during the last week of instruction.

Mean scores were determined and gains recorded for the vocabulary, comprehension, and total reading scores, with a test of significance calculated at the .05 level of confidence.

In the following table, is shown a comparison of the test scores recorded for 36 pupils in the first instructional cycle at the Emanuel IRIT. Note that all gains, except those reported for the girls in vocabulary are significant at the stated level of confidence.

TABLE 27

COMPARISON OF MEAN READING ACHIEVEMENT SCORES FOR AN EMANUEL IRIT FOURTH GRADE CYCLE, SEPTEMBER-NOVEMBER 1967[a]

Group and Subtest	N	September 1967			N	November 1967			Mean Diff.	Signif.
		Mean G.E.	Range	S.D.		Mean G.E.	Range	S.D.		
Boys										
Vocabulary	11	3.5	2.5-3.7	.36	11	4.0	3.1-5.0	.59	.5	2.57
Comprehension	11	3.3	2.6-3.8	.34	11	4.0	3.2-4.6	.39	.7	4.38
Total	11	3.3	2.5 3.8	.35	11	4.0	3.1-4.7	.44	.7	3.70
Girls										
Vocabulary	25	3.5	2.5-4.6	.54	24	3.9	3.5-4.7	.98	.4	1.83
Comprehension	25	3.3	2.4-3.7	.37	24	3.8	3.2-4.4	.85	.5	2.55
Total	25	3.4	2.4-4.0	.37	24	3.8	3.7-4.5	.86	.4	2.45

[a]All figures are rounded.

The second, or mid-winter cycle, which was selected for analysis, was made up of 41 fifth grade Arsenal students attending the Ann Street Reading Center.

TABLE 28

COMPARISON OF MEAN READING ACHIEVEMENT SCORES FOR AN ANN STREET IRIT FIFTH GRADE CYCLE, NOVEMBER 1967-JANUARY 1968[a]

Group and Subtest	November 1967				January 1968					
	N	Mean G.E.	Range	S.D.	N	Mean G.E.	Range	S.D.	Mean Diff.	Signif.
Boys										
Vocabulary	21	4.0	3.1-5.0	.46	20	5.3	4.1-6.9	.72	1.3	6.83
Comprehension	21	3.8	3.2-4.7	.36	20	4.9	3.7-6.4	.75	1.1	5.96
Total	21	3.9	3.3-4.7	.36	20	5.1	4.0-6.5	.63	1.3	7.79
Girls										
Vocabulary	24	4.2	3.4-5.0	.41	21	5.4	4.3-6.6	.52	1.3	8.98
Comprehension	24	4.0	3.3-4.5	.47	21	5.2	4.1-6.6	6.8	1.3	7.82
Total	24	4.1	3.5-4.5	.26	21	5.3	4.4-6.6	.54	1.3	10.01

[a]All figures are rounded.

Here again it should be noted that all gains for this fifth grade cycle greatly exceeded the specified level of confidence.

Scores from a typical third cycle, made up of a group of fifth grade youngsters at the Wish School, and receiving their IRIT instruction at the Garden Street IRIT Center, were similarly analyzed as shown in Table 29.

TABLE 29

COMPARISONS OF MEAN READING ACHIEVEMENT SCORES FOR A GARDEN STREET IRIT FOURTH AND FIFTH GRADE CYCLE, FEBRUARY - MARCH 1968[a]

Group and Subtest	February 1968 N	February 1968 Mean G.E.	February 1968 Range	February 1968 S.D.	March 1968 N	March 1968 Mean G.E.	March 1968 Range	March 1968 S.D.	Mean Diff.	Signif.
Grade 4 Boys										
Vocabulary	7	3.6	2.3-4.7	.75	7	4.7	3.3-6.0	1.0	1.1	2.28
Comprehension	7	3.4	2.7-4.2	.57	7	4.7	3.7-5.6	.68	1.3	3.90
Total	7	3.4	2.5-3.8	.63	7	4.8	3.9-5.8	.74	1.4	3.80
Girls										
Vocabulary	12	3.7	2.7-4.4	.57	12	5.1	4.3-5.7	.50	1.4	6.44
Comprehension	12	3.6	3.1-4.0	.30	12	4.9	3.4-5.8	.80	1.3	5.28
Total	12	3.7	2.9-4.2	.40	12	5.0	3.8-5.7	.64	1.3	5.95
Grade 5 Boys										
Vocabulary	14	3.6	2.9-4.7	.50	14	5.4	4.5-6.8	.60	1.8	8.70
Comprehension	14	3.6	2.6-4.1	.44	14	5.5	4.6-6.5	.64	1.9	9.19
Total	14	3.7	3.1-4.3	.38	14	5.6	4.7-6.6	.51	1.9	11.18
Grade 5 Girls										
Vocabulary	11	4.0	3.6-4.7	.35	11	5.6	4.9-7.3	.71	1.6	6.70
Comprehension	11	3.7	3.2-4.2	.33	11	5.8	5.0-7.6	.76	2.1	8.45
Total	11	3.8	3.4-4.3	.31	11	5.6	5.1-7.0	.61	1.8	8.80

[a]All figures are rounded.

From the preceding table, a number of evidences are reactively apparent.

1. All gains substantially exceeded the stated level of confidence.
2. At the fourth grade level, the girls recorded the largest gains; at the fifth grade level, the opposite was true.
3. Gains in comprehension generally exceeded those recorded in vocabulary.

As a preliminary step to the determination of a shift in emphasis from the intermediate grade levels to a primary focus, a group of 19 Northwest-Jones first graders received IRIT instruction at the Emanuel Center during the spring of the 1968 school year. The results of this instruction is summarized in the following table.

TABLE 30

COMPARISON OF MEAN READING ACHIEVEMENT SCORES FOR AN EMANUEL IRIT FIRST GRADE CYCLE, FEBRUARY - JUNE 1968[a]

Group and Subtest	February 1968 N	Mean G.E.	Range	S.D.	June 1968 N	Mean G.E.	Range	S.D.	Mean Diff.	Signif.
Boys										
Word Form	15	1.4	1.0-2.4	.38	15	1.8	1.0-2.8	.50	.4	2.52
Word Recog.[b]	15	1.0	.5-1.3	.25	15	1.3	1.1-1.6	.29	.3	3.98
Letter " [b]	14	18.4	5-23	5.35	15	21.3	14-24	3.32	2.9	1.70
Girls										
Word Form	8	1.4	1.1-1.8	.25	11	1.8	1.0-2.8	.43	.5	2.95
Word Recog.[b]	10	.8	.5-1.1	.30	10	1.3	1.1-1.6	.28	.5	4.05
Letter " [b]	7	20.6	15-24	3.36	11	22.6	14-24	1.51	2.0	1.46

[a]All figures are rounded.

[b]Raw scores.

The data in Table 30 shows that while significant gains were made by the boys and the girls in both word forms and word recognition, gains in letter recognition were minimal.

While test data generally revealed substantial gains for the several groups tested, it was felt that other evidences of program success were indicators. Consequently, a series of questionnaires designed to elicit reactions from the parents, students, and teachers were constructed.

To investigate the parent's assessment of the IRIT instruction, the reading department developed a letter questionnaire which was distributed to the parents of all children enrolled in the IRIT centers. This distribution took place half way through the instructional cycle. From a sample of 89 returned questionnaires, the following data was obtained:

TABLE 31

SUMMARY OF 89 PARENT RESPONSES TO AN IRIT PROGRAM EVALUATION, SCHOOL YEAR 1967-1968

Question	Per Cent of Responses[a]		
	Much	Some	None
1. Does your child enjoy attending the Reading Program?	93	7	0
2. Do you think the Reading Team is helping your child with his reading?	87	13	0
3. Does your child spend any more time reading at home?	53	45	2
4. Do you think the time in reading school is helping your child with his other classes?	82	12	6
5. Has your child talked to you about reading school?	79	19	2
6. Does your child enjoy having three teachers in reading school?	91	6	2
7. Would you like to have your child attend reading school again?	93	3	3

[a]All responses are rounded and may not equal 100.

It should be noted that:

1. A vast majority of responses indicated that parents felt their children had enjoyed the IRIT enrollment.

2. Fully 87 per cent of the parents thought the program had helped their children.
3. Only three parents, representing 3 per cent of the total queried, did not feel that a second instructional cycle would be desirable.

The contention that IRIT instruction was both enjoyable and helpful is further borne out by a number of parent comments, extracted at random from the questionnaire. The negative comment (5) was the only one recorded.

1. I am very pleased with the program. But I do wish it could be started early in school grades, say around 2nd - 3rd because these classes do help in other subjects and waited until 4th grade they are so far behind in the reading and other studies by the 4th grade.
2. I think it is a very nice and helpful program. I hope it continues. Antony really likes attending your classes.
3. I am happy Michael was able to attend this reading class. I think it has helped alot with his reading because he is a slow child.
4. I would like to see him bring home books to do "homework". We welcome any type of program that is beneficial to our child's education. Keep up the good work!
5. Merwin's grades have fallen, since he started the Reading Program. I'm sorry about this.
6. In these classes of reading my child has learned to read very well.

To further investigate the direct experiential effects of IRIT exposure, a reading department-developed IRIT Student Evaluation Form was distributed to 114 pupils enrolled in the program. A sampling of responses was tabulated as follows:

TABLE 32

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO AN IRIT STUDENT EVALUATION FORM, SCHOOL YEAR 1967-1968[a]

Questions	Percentage of Response N=114			
	Very Much	Some	Not At All	Don't Know
How much did you like changing classes?	86	7	3	4
How much did you like having three teachers?	88	8	2	3
How much do you feel reading school has helped your reading?	95	16	0	3
How hard was the work in reading school for you?	1	77	16	6
How happy are your parents with the work you did in this school?	81	4	0	15

[a]All figures are rounded and may not equal 100%.

A summary of the responses contained in Table 31 showed that a majority of the pupils queried:

1. Liked the novelty of having three teachers and changing classes.
2. Felt that they were helped in reading by their IRIT experiences.
3. Thought that their parents were happy about their IRIT work.

To assess the total effects of the IRIT program on the classroom teacher, the reading department developed a Teacher Evaluation Form. This form consisted of two parts. One part contained a series of five questions related to the effects of IRIT reading instruction while the second part was used for teacher comments. Data was collected from twenty-two participating teachers, and this information is summarized below.

TABLE 33

SUMMARY OF TEACHER RESPONSES TO AN IRIT PROGRAM EVALUATION FORM, SPRING 1968[a]

Question	Per cent of Responses N=22			
	Some	None	Decrease	No Answer
What improvement have you noticed in reading skills?	91	9		
Have you noticed any improvement in their attitude toward reading?	86	14		
What apparent changes have you noticed in the pupil's attention span?	68	32		
What apparent changes have you noticed in better behavior?	41	46	5	9

[a]All figures are rounded

In addition to the foregoing responses, thirteen of the twenty-two teachers responded that they had visited an IRIT; nine teachers-fully 41% of the total-had not made such a visitation.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

For the third consecutive year, three Intensive Reading Instructional Teams continued to provide a substantial number of youngsters with an intensive instructional approach to inner-city reading problems.

Findings obtained during the 1967-1968 school year showed:

1. Significant mean gains in vocabulary, comprehension, and total reading were generally recorded for the majority of intermediate grade pupils enrolled in the program.
2. At the primary level, significant gains were made in both word forms and in word recognition, while gains in letter recognitions were minimal.

From the data available, it can be concluded that the IRIT program is continuing to place substantial numbers of youngsters, in a new environment, which for them is conducive to a reading achievement theretofore unrecorded in the regular classroom setting.